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PRESS RELEASE

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Coordinator

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Let's Get Educated! "Storm Drain Detectives" Present Their Report Card of the Mokelumne River to the Public

Lodi, Calif. –The Storm Drain Detectives, a local group of water quality student scientists, have been gathering data as part of their curriculum from the Mokelumne River since the school year began in August 2010. Now that the school year is almost over, it's time to share with the public what they have found lurking in the data.

The public is invited to their presentation at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 12 at the Lodi Public Library's Community Room, 201 W. Locust St., Lodi. The presentation will include guest speakers from the City of Lodi's engineering staff, who will present the Low Impact Development guidelines overview, and Dr. Loren Oki, a UC Davis researcher, who will present his findings on Urban Runoff, which he calls "urban drool."

Sponsored by the City of Lodi, Public Works, the Storm Drain Detectives program is in its 11th year and has helped hundreds of students and community members understand the murky world of water quality. Since storm water run-off drains untreated into the Mokelumne River or a Woodbridge Irrigation Canal, understanding the impact this runoff has on the local waterways is of vital concern.

"Over the course of the past 11 years, this program has done incredible work helping local people understand how city streets drain untreated run-off to the river and canals. I am really proud of the students' work," said Curt Juran, City of Lodi Streets and Drainage Superintendent.

Lodi High students from teacher Melissa Turner's honors biology class will present an overview of the water quality parameters that the students test for twice monthly. Tokay High teacher Sandi Starr's marine biology students will present an overview of the temperature and dissolved oxygen data and the possible effect they have on the fish in the river. Lodi Academy and Jim Elliot Christian High School also helped collect the data, which was taken at five sites along the river.

"Everyone in Lodi who knows and enjoys the Mokelumne River should be aware of the impact that runoff from our homes and gardens has on the river," said Aaron Lange, chairperson of the Lower Mokelumne River Watershed Stewardship Steering Committee. "I think the Storm Drain Detectives is a fantastic program because it also teaches students 'if you can't measure it, you can't manage it.' They identify specific, quantitative indicators of water quality and pollution which gives watershed residents the ability to strengthen current efforts of pollution control, develop new programs, or track water quality improvements over time.

"As good environmental stewards living in Lodi, it only behooves us to learn what we can from the students' work. Water quality, sooner or later, affects everyone. The next step for Lodi residents would be to perform a Watershed Self- Assessment for one's own home's footprint. Call it the butterfly effect, where one small change we make at home has a greater impact if we all made similar changes."

More about the Storm Drain Detectives can be found at www.lodi.gov, see Stormwater, then Storm Drain Detectives. To learn more about the Lower Mokelumne River Watershed stewardship in action, see www.sjcrwd.org.

MEDIA NOTES: To schedule an interview regarding the Storm Drain Detectives, please contact Kathy Grant at (209) 327-2063 or via email at kgrant@lodi.gov